



AN AGENDA FOR THE
AFRICAN AMERICAN
COMMUNITY OF
INDIANAPOLIS

IPS-Mayor of Indianapolis

IPS's innovation network schools that have a mayor-sponsored charter create a relationship between the Mayor of Indianapolis and IPS schools. Collaboration between these two institutions create a two-tiered system of education aimed at the improvement of their overall educational delivery system. The Merritt Administration will offer to hold one of IPS's regular public meetings in the Mayor's Office once a quarter. Members of the administration, IPS, and mayor-sponsored charter schools within IPS's district will gather to update one another and the public on the state of education in their schools, and work to promote a just and transparent path to future educational success by sharing best practices.

High Performing and High Quality Schools

A high performing and/or high-quality education includes well-equipped schools, qualified teachers, parental, and community support that fosters an environment of proficiency, creativity and inquiry for critical citizenship in a global economy.¹

Mayor-Sponsored Charter Schools

High-performing mayor-sponsored charter schools should be identified through a rigorous public vetting process that actively invites comment and participation by the public. This process should be promoted by the Mayor's office if there is evidence-based, peer reviewed research to support its curricular outcomes. These schools will open only after this vetting process and consideration of the impact on existing public schools, and only where they are deemed to be effective and needed for the targeted community. Additionally, these charter schools must demonstrate strong community support and acceptance by meeting the enrollment target agreed to in the charter contract.

Strong neighborhood schools promote stability and greater opportunities for future success. All schools must be held to the same accountability metrics in order to ensure future viability, racial equity, and the promotion of positive educational achievement standards across the city. Furthermore, if a charter school should close, an early and transparent message must be

¹ <https://www.asccc.org/content/defining-high-quality-education-all-studentstestimony-prepared-public-hearing-joint>.

made to families. There must be an effort to coordinate with students and families to ensure that every student is enrolled in a new school. When a mayor-sponsored charter school closes, the board must provide the data that led to the decision to close the school. In addition, the board must be required to provide a mitigation plan to avoid future closures before a new charter is granted by the mayor's office. A Merritt Administration will provide follow-up support to students of closed charter schools.

School Performance

More than half of all schools in Indianapolis are graded below average to failing. As a result of traditional public schools such as IPS being graded on growth and proficiency while charter schools are graded on growth only. We can no longer accept underperformance or failure based upon differing grading systems for traditional public schools versus charter schools. This system distracts from targeting schools that genuinely need the resources to improve so funds can be allocated to promote schools equitably. A Merritt Administration will work with both IPS and a mayoral cabinet made up of the 6 college and university presidents in Indianapolis. This cabinet will support the culture of primary, secondary, and post-secondary education in IPS and mayor-sponsored charter schools. The focus of this cabinet will be to guide children toward future career success in life.

Charter & Innovation School Boards

The success of our schools is a primary concern in education, but local context is essential for that success. That is why a Merritt Administration will require an increased presence of local citizens including parents, former teachers, community leaders, and non-voting student advisors on the school boards of mayor-sponsored charter schools, including innovation network schools with a mayor's sponsored charter. Anyone who can bring success to the education of our children should be encouraged to do so. However, ensuring that the majority of school board members reside within the community and are a direct stakeholder in that school is an important part in ensuring that success.

Ending “Zero-Tolerance” Schooling

Education is the single greatest pathway to success. Thus, expulsion is a punishment that can have harsh ramifications for the future of a child. While discipline is necessary in schools, research shows that “no excuse” policies do severe damage to some students. Students of color are particularly injured by these policies that are often dealt to them in an inequitable manner. Furthermore, male students of color are disproportionately introduced to the penal system too often. Therefore, a Merritt Administration will be directing schools with a mayor-sponsored charter to cease such policies and work with IPS schools to encourage the same.

School Placement

Every neighborhood deserves a school that equitably serves them. A Merritt Administration will authorize high-performing, high-quality charter schools with evidence-based, peer reviewed outcomes in only those neighborhoods that lack convenient access to educational resources. We must ensure areas like the far eastside, which has suffered the loss of high schools like Lighthouse, have convenient access to local comprehensive schooling options. A Merritt Administration will also work with organizations like the Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership in their efforts to create teacher villages, so teachers can live in the communities which they serve.

Economic Statistics

Issues that impact the economic state of the African American community are broken down into two main parts - the unemployment rate and the under-utilization of minority owned businesses in city contracts. Indiana’s unemployment rate has dropped to 3.5% which is lower than the national average. In recent years, the unemployment rate is at an all-time low of 3.2% for the metropolitan area of Indianapolis.

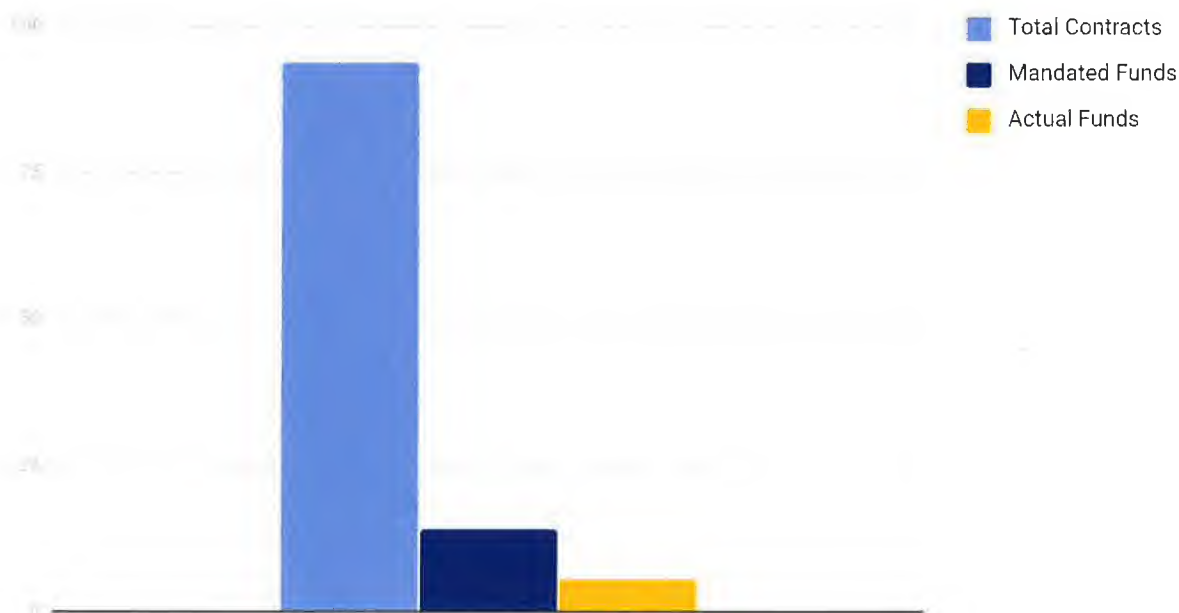
At a glance, our economy seems to be doing well; however, there are populations within Indianapolis that are left behind. The African American community is around 30% of the total population of the city of Indianapolis but accounts for a majority of the unemployment rate.

While unemployment rates for white residents remained at 2.9% from Q1 2018 to Q1 2019, African American unemployment in Indiana rose from 4.8% to 9.1% in one year. African American unemployment is three times that of white residents and the unemployment gaps continue to widen in Indianapolis.

There has not been transparency with MWBE Section 202-401 of the Code of the Consolidated City of Indianapolis. Marion County mandates that 15% of monies spent in Indianapolis (Marion County) should be utilized for minority-owned business enterprises.²

For the past four years Indianapolis has not met the goals for minority participation. In perspective, Indianapolis spent 94 million dollars in 2018, of which 5.5 million dollars went to minority businesses (MBE) instead of the 14.2 million dollars that should have gone to minority businesses.

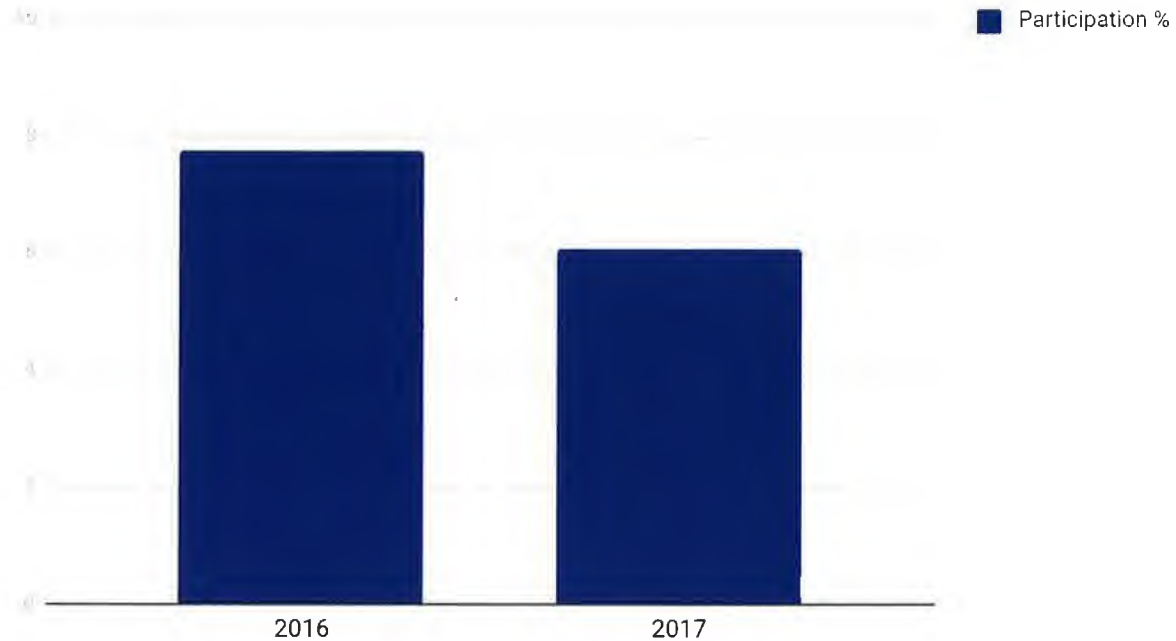
MBE Contracts



²https://library.municode.com/in/indianapolis/_marion_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TITIORAD_CH202MAOF

In 2017, MBE utilization was at 6.08% and in 2016 MBE utilization was at 7.74%

MBE Participation



The current administration does not track or list their XBE participation rates on the city website. There is no transparency in the amount of utilization of XBE businesses. The designation of Minority Business Enterprise does not break down which businesses are African American versus other minority groups. Publishing this information would help the city to specifically advocate for business development to underserved populations. Hence, an explanation and strategy to reverse the 2016-2019 decrease in number of MBE's versus all other XBE's may be possible.

Indianapolis ranks 220 in racial inclusion out of 274 cities. According to a report by the Indy Chamber and PPI, Indianapolis is the 6th most economically segregated region in the

country which is up from 53rd in 1990. A child born in the bottom 20% of the income distribution has a 4.8% chance of reaching the top 20%.³

There has been an 80% increase in poverty over the last decade. According to the Federal Reserve of Chicago, the Black poverty rate is more than twice the poverty rate of white households. According to the United Way of Central Indiana, 45% of families in Marion County are either below the poverty line (19%) or ALICE families (26%) (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). This is the working poor.

Analysis of the current economic conditions of the African American community, businesses, and employment rates denote substantial barriers to accumulating financial capital. The city's midterm disparity study suggests that accumulating business capital and breaking into closed networks are challenges for many minority businesses.

Economic Equity Solutions

A Merritt Administration will work to ensure economic inclusion for all by implementing the following:

- The creation of MBE classes & seminars on Community Development Block Grants & New Market Tax Credits to leverage investments made in low income communities.
- Creating an interactive database of all minority businesses within the county and their capacity that can be accessed 24/7.
- Initiating an invest downward model.
- Corporations will be required to hire locally to earn their tax incentives from the city similar to the Work Opportunity Tax Credit.
- Penalties and sanctions for M/WBE participation noncompliance. The fees collected will go into a fund that helps minority business startups.
- Financial Capacity Building:
 - o Work with nonprofits, federal and state governments to offer small grants and loans (\$1000 - \$50,000) to minority business startups. In many cases, African

Americans have been locked out of the financial system and need to build capacity before applying for small business loan programs designed for those with wealth and access to the financial system.

- Create a Food Insecurity TIF that would incentivize grocers and local markets to invest in underserved areas designated as food deserts.
- Develop a Community Financial Literacy Program that allows minority and low-income neighborhood/community groups to find or be allocated a financial advisor. The advisor will advise them on TIFs, New Market Tax Credits, Low-Income Tax Credits, and Real Estate so that communities can vet, partner, and even implement their own development strategies for the benefit of their quality of life.
- Reduce the number of *No Bid* city contracts.
- M/WBE contract and spend data will be posted on the city's website consistently.
- Provide the total number of available contracts that are up for bid in a year and list the departments that adhere to the MWVDOBE goals.

Proposed Community Solutions Adopted:

- The Equal Opportunity Advisory Board will host joint information sessions with community stakeholders and organizations on the process for filing claims.
- The Office of Minority and Women Business Development, community stakeholders, and organizations will host quarterly bidder and capacity-building conferences to prepare minority contractors to do business with the city.
- Identify the ethnic composition within the M/WBE participation categories.
- A prime contractor who fails to comply with M/WBE participation goals would be subject to any or all of the following penalties:
 - o (1) suspension of contract;
 - o (2) withholding of funds;
 - o (3) retraction of contract based on material breach;
 - o (4) refusal to accept a bid;

- o (5) disqualification of a bidder, contractor, or other business from eligibility for providing goods or services to the City for a period not to exceed 2 years;
 - o (6) payment of liquidated damages.
- Funds received from non-compliance fees will be used to support M/WBE start ups.

TIF Reform:

- Widen the focus of The Department of Metropolitan Development's TIF allocations to include community engagement. Currently, DMD focuses on financing developer's retail and housing projects with taxpayer dollars. DMD should hold seminars to inform communities on how to leverage TIF dollars for community rebuilding.
- Use TIF allocations to finance community owned multi-use developments in cooperative, co-ownership, or community controlled land trust models.
- Use TIF allocations to finance home repair loans for existing owner-occupied structures in low-income communities.
- Require that at least 50% of TIF funds be used for workforce development projects that have resident-led community partner organizations.
- Evaluate all TIF requests to ensure equity and accountability. Currently, the TIF process values promises of future tax revenue over the improvement of the quality of life for existing residents.
- TIF transparency includes the creation of a community advisory board made solely of residents living within the TIF district for allocation oversight. TIF fund balances will be posted online biannually by the city.

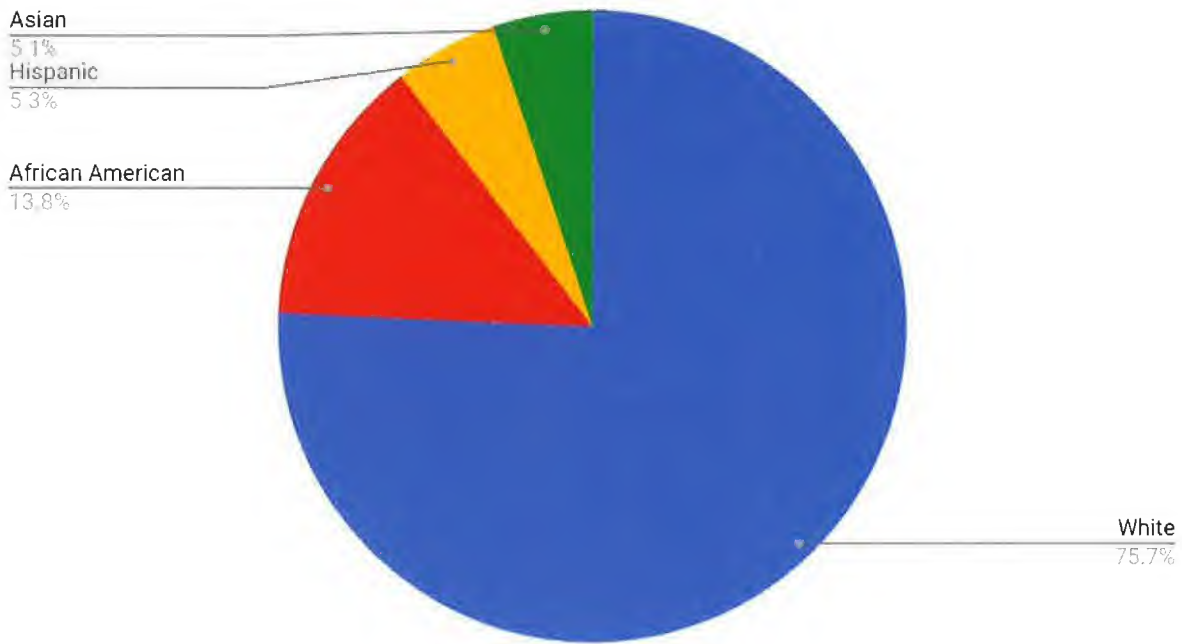
Tax Credit Reform:

- ## Zoning Reform

- ## Housing Statistics

In Indianapolis there were 19,847 total mortgages issued. Mortgage breakdowns by race are as follows: 13,537 were issued to white residents and 2,475 were issued to African American residents 957 were issued to Hispanic residents and 920 were issued to Asian Residents.

Home Ownership by Race



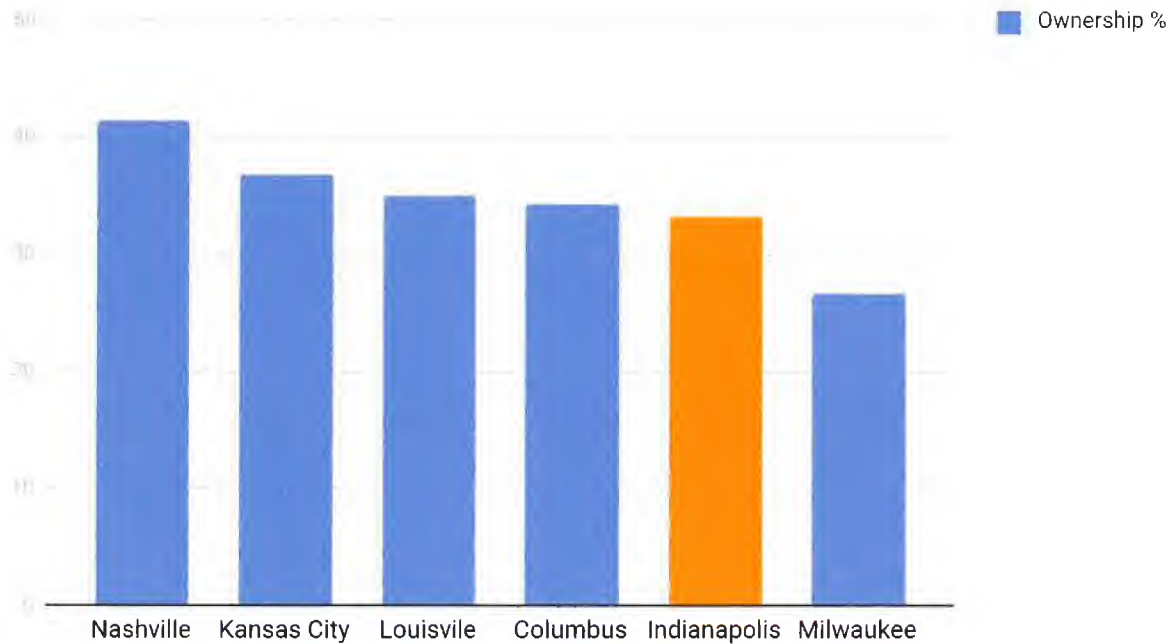
African Americans are 28.1% of the population of Indianapolis Indiana and received 13.8% of new mortgages.

Denial rate for African American borrowers is 26.14% as compared to White borrowers at 14.14%

Brookings Institute reports that in the Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson MSA, black homes are devalued by roughly \$19,000 based on comparable homes in other neighborhoods.

The 2017 Indianapolis white homeownership rate was 64.1% while the black homeownership rate was 33.3% which was amongst the lowest among comparable cities. (Nashville, 41.5%, Columbus, OH 34.3%, Kansas City, 36.8%, Louisville 35.1%, Milwaukee 26.7%)

Black Home Ownership



IU Public Policy Institute found that minority populations, and specifically black female headed households experience evictions at higher rates than other groups.

According to research from the IU Public Policy Institute, Marion County had the third highest eviction rate in the state in 2016, as Wayne, Lawrence and Warren townships had eviction filing rates over 20% and evictions rates over 8.5%.

Out of reach study for 2019 shows affordable housing remains out of reach for many Hoosiers. (NLIHC, 2019b)

20% of black households and 16% of Hispanic households are extremely low-income renters, compared to just 6% of white households (NLIHC, 2019b)

A low-wage black worker at the 20th percentile of wages (by race) earns 16%

less than a low-wage white worker, while a low-wage Hispanic worker earns 12% less (NLIHC, 2019b)

Non-resident apartment and home-owners and absentee landlords have financially and emotionally abused their occupants as well as endangered their health.

The deteriorating apartment complexes, homes and other rental units further diminish the physical infrastructure, appearance and safety of many neighborhoods already beset with a multitude of other issues related to poverty.

Housing Solutions

There will be affordable, sustainable mortgages to be made available to all credit-worthy borrowers, specifically people of color and low wealth families.

Creating an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance

This ordinance would ensure the production of affordable units in new development by establishing affordable housing set-aside requirements on residential projects that meet certain criteria. These requirements are set at a sustainable level as determined through an economic feasibility study. This will promote mixed income communities and will keep the culture of our ever developing neighborhoods. For projects with 50 units or more 10% set aside for affordable units and small projects 49 units or less 5% set aside for affordable units. Affordable is defined as 50% average median income (AMI).

City grants to support Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI's) and increase the number of affordable housing options in Indianapolis by providing mortgages, construction loans, and bridge loans for both single- and multi-family housing will be employed.

Quality of life will be addressed by not only providing high-quality, low-income housing but also seeking to make the communities around low income housing safer with more access to food, public transit, banks and parks.

An Indianapolis Commission for African American Males to evaluate the black male homeless population and ways to serve them will be created.

Proposed Community Solutions Adopted:

- The city will work with central Indiana legislators to develop legislation that would give the city greater authority to regulate, fine and secure the property of corporate and absentee landlords. Holding apartment and home rental to high standards of quality for rental units; timely and complete repairs, maintenance of health and safety standards and adherence to fair rental rates should be the goal of proposed legislation.
- The city's affordable housing strategy will address high crime areas first. The citizens will receive semi-annual updates regarding outcomes of housing construction/renovation, elimination of abandoned/deteriorated housing.

Public Safety

Citizens in Indianapolis want to be and feel safe. They want to be able to enjoy the conveniences of city life without the worry of being a victim of crime. Every person in Indianapolis deserves to live in a neighborhood that is protected by police officers where a symbiotic relationship of respect is fostered in police-community relations. Equally important, I am concerned about the disparities in how crime impacts African-American residents within our city. While I am creating a plan to get our city on the right track, failing to address this specific issue is a disservice to our city because there is a need to address the issues of the African-American community in order for all of Indy to prosper and be safe.

Out of the 159 homicides in 2018, 117 victims were African-American, 103 victims were African-American males; and, of the 82 cases that are still unsolved, 66 victims are African-American.⁵ This is unacceptable. We deserve better.

Community Relationships

Unfortunately, the communities most affected by this violence have a distrust of law enforcement; this is a systemic issue that needs to be addressed. People should not be in fear

⁵ By December 31, 2018 there were 159 homicides in Indianapolis.

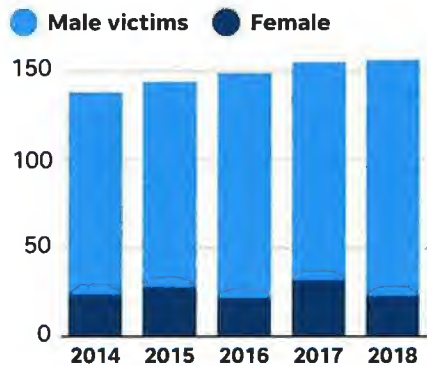
<https://databases.usatodaynetwork.com/indystar/indianapolis-crime-homicide-list-2018?sorted=%5B%7B%22id%22%3A%22NUMBER%22%2C%22desc%22%3Atrue%7D%5D>

when officers are called to help in any situation including when Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) is called to a school. We need accountability and relationship building to intentionally foster trust within our schools and neighborhoods. We need members of the community to connect with our officers and engage them positively outside of an enforcement capacity to encourage public safety.

Building solid community relationships and cultivating them to ensure that keeping our streets safe is a shared community responsibility is the goal. Officers should be accessible not only in times of distress but as an integral part in the daily lives of the communities they patrol in order to deter or prevent a crime.

A GRIM RECORD

In 2018, 156 Indianapolis residents have died in a criminal homicide.* The total tops the previous record set last year.



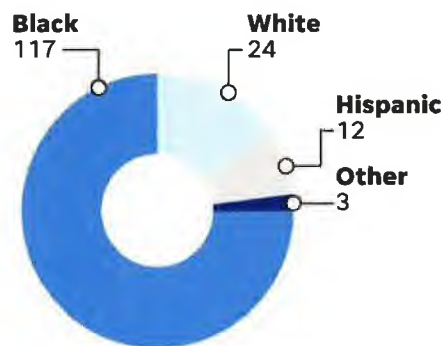
*Through Dec. 20

SOURCE: IndyStar analysis of IMPD data

STEPHEN J. BEARD AND RYAN MARTIN / INDYSTAR ⁶

RACE OF VICTIMS

Three in every four criminal homicide victims in Indianapolis were black.



*Through Dec. 20

SOURCE: Analysis of IMPD data

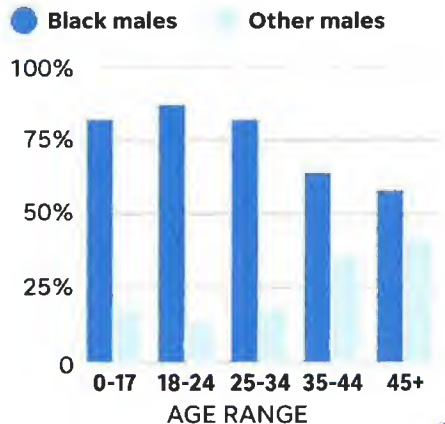
STEPHEN J. BEARD / INDYSTAR ⁷

⁶ <https://www.indystar.com/story/news/crime/2018/12/23/indianapolis-crime-homicide-problem-explained-6-charts/1975426002/>

⁷ Ibid.

BLACK MALES

The percentage gap between black male victims and all other males was widest for 18- to 24-year-olds.

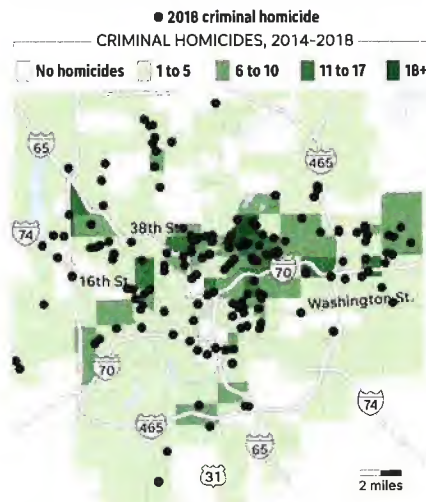


SOURCE: IMPD

STEPHEN J. BEARD / INDYSTAR

CRIMINAL HOMICIDES IN INDY

Through Dec. 20, there have been 156 criminal homicides in Indianapolis, topping the record of 155 set in 2017. Below, the locations of the 2018 homicides are placed over census tracts that are shaded according to the number of homicides recorded by the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department from 2014 to present.



SOURCE: IndyStar analysis of IMPD criminal homicide data, 2014-2018

STEPHEN J. BEARD / INDYSTAR

Proposed Solutions

A Merritt Administration on all levels will champion meaningful connections with residents and simultaneously send the message that crime in any community will not be tolerated. We will create opportunities to engage and include our community partners and the faith community in the effort to build mutual trust between police agencies and the communities they serve. Following are some key issues and recommendations that were identified through research, meetings with community leaders¹⁰, organizations that addressed concerns within the African American community¹¹, along with other promising practices to develop collaborative strategies for moving Indy forward and keeping Indy safe.

Collaborative Strategies and Solutions

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ I met with church leaders, grassroots organizations, concerned citizens, and youth leaders.

¹¹ I attended forums hosted by the African American Coalition of Indianapolis (AACI); the Baptist Ministers Alliance (BMA); and, the Concerned Clergy of Greater Indianapolis (CCGI).

- **Community Review of the Citizens Police Complaint Process**¹² – A Merritt Administration acknowledges the need for community oversight in “controversial uses of force and other incidents that can damage relationships between police and their communities. In some cases, a perceived egregious act of misconduct by a single officer in one city not only damages police-community relationships locally; it can gain nationwide attention and reduce trust of the police generally.”¹³
- **Transparency and Accountability** – A Merritt Administration will utilize technology to provide easily accessible public information about policies on use of force, community member complaints, and other issues.
- **Reduce Bias and Improve Cultural Competency** – A Merritt Administration would continue and improve the programs for Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department implicit bias and cultural competency. Research shows that “individuals who are made aware of their implicit biases are motivated to implement unbiased behaviors.”¹⁴
- **Promote Collaboration and Visibility in the Community** – A Merritt Administration will create a Metro Homicide Unit that brings together experienced homicide investigators from the 7 surrounding law enforcement agencies, ATF, the FBI, and the Prosecutor to assist in solving homicides. We will conduct immediate interviews of those arrested and share information gathered with the Metro Homicide Unit. When a homicide is committed, we will send in 10 to 15 district cars from all over the city to swarm the hot spots. However, to discourage any criminal behavior, we will partner and offer funding to grassroots organizations committed to character, personal development, civics, and academic programming.

According to the Police Executive Research Forum of 2015, “Finding opportunities to interact with community members in a non-enforcement context helps to reduce bias on the part of community members and police officers. Getting to know community residents helps both

¹² Public Safety Presentation by Marshawn Wolley during the BMA and CCGI forum.

¹³ Police Executive Research Forum, *Recommendations for Police-Community Relationship Building*, July 10, 2015.

¹⁴ Ibid.

groups to break down personal barriers and overcome stereotypes, and allows officers to learn which residents of a neighborhood are law-abiding and which ones are not.”¹⁵ Examples of potential programs that build mutual trust between police and the community include:

- “Adult and youth police academies,
- Sports teams or Police Athletic Leagues,
- Ride-a-longs with officers,
- Police involvement in local school activities, and
- Police participation in (or police-led) community events,”¹⁶
- Improve upon the system for mental health officers/personnel to dispatch in cases involving mental illness,
- Promotion of rehabilitation and restorative justice for formerly incarcerated citizens,
- End the school to prison pipeline by working with grassroots organizations,
- Creation of the Indianapolis Commission on the Social Status African American Males similar to the effort started by former Mayor Greg Ballard’s *Your Life Matters*.¹⁷

Internal Diversity and Professional Growth Opportunities – A Merritt Administration will be committed to the challenge of recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse workforce within IMPD. We will improve upon the newly created Office of Diversity and Inclusion¹⁸ within IMPD and actively support a qualified police force that accurately reflects the demographics of Indianapolis.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷

<https://www.indystar.com/story/opinion/editorials/2015/04/17/editorial-plight-young-black-males-serious-solve-half-measures/25944279/>

¹⁸ Public Safety Presentation by Marshawn Wolley during the BMA and CCGI forum.